Toribius

(d. c. 460)

BRIEFING

Turibius of Astorga (Spanish and Italian *Toribio*, Polish *Turrybiusz*; * c. 402, † Astorga, c. 460 or 476) was bishop of the northern Spanish city of Astorga from 444

LIFE

Since there is another saint of the same name, who became known as Turibius of Liébana or "Turibius the Monk" and was Bishop of Palencia in the 6th century , the two people were already confused with each other in the Early Middle Ages.

Nothing is known about the saint's origins and early years; some sources place his birth in Betanzos in present-day Galicia . Other sources claim that he came from a wealthy family in Turin (Italy). Later, he is said to have made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land , where he was ordained a priest and appointed guardian of the holy sites. Upon his return, he is said to have brought back a relic of the True Cross , which was taken to the monastery of Santo Toribio de Liébana, founded by his namesake, and is still venerated there today. According to tradition, a statue of the Virgin Mary also originated from this journey. It was later hidden from the Moors and subsequently considered lost, but was finally rediscovered around the year 1200 by a Templar who was helping to build their new castle in Ponferrada . The statue was hidden under a holm oak tree *(encina)* and has been venerated in the city ever since.

In 444, Turibius became Bishop of Astorga and began converting the pagan Suebi ; he also engaged in the theological debate with Priscillianism. After the city was captured by the Visigothic king Theodoric II in 456, he was taken prisoner and deported to Gaul . After his release , he devoted himself to rebuilding Astorga. His remains were transferred to the monastery of Liébana in the 8th century.

VENERATION

Several churches—especially in northern Spain and the former Spanish colonial empire—are dedicated to St. Turibius (*Santo-Toribio)*; his feast day is April 16. The male given names *Toribio* or *Turrybiusz* are extremely rare.

DEPICTION

Turibius of Astorga was rarely depicted, and then always in episcopal vestments.